

**News from Rep. Stephanie Herseth**

**For Immediate Release**

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**HOUSE PASSES HERSETH AMENDMENT TO ELIMINATE VISA LOTTERY**

**Legislation To Remove Randomness from Immigration and Enhance National Security  
Included in Border Control Act**

**December 17, 2005, Washington, D.C.** - The House of Representatives last night passed legislation introduced by Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth (D- SD) and Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) to make our immigration policy less random and enhance our national security. This bipartisan Goodlatte/Herseth amendment legislation was passed as part of H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. The amendment would eliminate the visa lottery program from the Immigration and Nationality Act, in order to make the administration of our immigration laws more consistent and fair.

“National security is too important to allow this institutional randomness in our immigration policy.” Herseth said. “The visa lottery injects a level of unnecessary and irresponsible uncertainty into the immigration process. My amendment is a practical provision that will make our nation safer, while preserving the existing procedures for qualified immigrants with ties to an employer or family member lawfully residing in the United States. These relationships ensure new immigrants have a stake in our nation’s future and continued success. These relationships are absent under the visa lottery program.”

Each year, there is a national immigration “lottery,” which randomly chooses 50,000 aliens for legal residency in the United States. All other immigrant visas are issued to foreign nationals who have an existing connection to a family member or employer in the United States.

The amendment was co-sponsored by Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) who is also chairman of the House Agriculture committee, on which he serves along with Rep. Herseth.

Rep. Goodlatte said, "I thank Rep. Herseth for her bipartisan support to ensure our nation's security while making our immigration laws more consistent and fair. I would also like to recognize Stephanie's hard work to persuade so many from her party to support this common sense provision."

Herseth also worked closely with Democrat Rick Boucher, also of Virginia, who has long been an advocate of eliminating the visa lottery program. Rep. Boucher said, "As someone who has been supportive of eliminating the visa lottery for a number of years, I was pleased to see one of our newer members step forward and take a lead on such an important national security issue."

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*Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth serves South Dakota in the U.S. House of Representatives . She is a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, a group of moderate Democrats committed to fiscal discipline and strong national security, and is co-chair of the Rural Working Group, which is dedicated to raising the profile of issues important to rural America. She also serves on three committees vital to South Dakota's interests: Agriculture, Veterans' Affairs and Resources.*